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NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

FEB. 15, 2012

God never abandons us

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – God is near even though it may seem like he does not hear people's prayers or has abandoned his flock, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Faced with difficult and painful situations, when God seems to not hear us, we must not be afraid to give him all of the weight we

carry in our heart, we should not be afraid to cry out to him about our suffering," he said.

Speaking at his weekly general audience Feb. 8, Pope Benedict continued his catechesis on prayer by highlighting Christ's prayer from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Jesus' cry to the Father from the cross was not immediately understood by those nearby, the pope explained.

Some thought he was calling Elijah, asking him to prolong his life, but Jesus was quoting Psalm 22, which affirms God's presence amid his people, the pope said. "Jesus is praying this psalm

with the awareness of the Father's presence," he continued.

"Many ask how this omnipotent God could not intervene to spare his own Son?" Because Jesus' cry is not one for help, he said, but rather a prayer for his people and all peoples, Pope Benedict explained.

Catholics invited to the Capitol

The Bishops of New York State will join hundreds of fellow Catholic New Yorkers at the annual Catholics at the Capitol public policy advocacy day March 13, at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany.

Participants will meet with state legislators to discuss a variety of issues including opposition to the "Reproductive Health Act" which expands abortion, support for preserving the Maternity & Early Childhood Foundation and preserving Catholic schools, among other topics.

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Trinity teacher is honored

Donna McPherson, physical education teacher at the Massena school, is

named "Amazing Person" FULL STORY, PAGE 4

A CALL FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

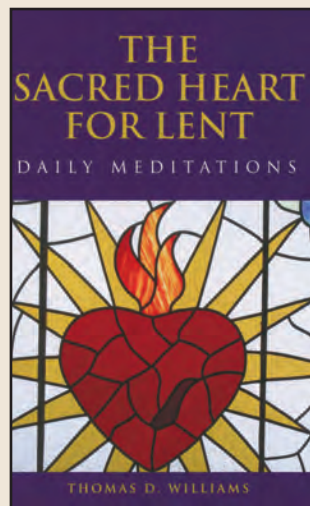


CNS PHOTO/JEFF NEIRA, CBS

Cardinal-designate Timothy M. Dolan of New York discusses the new birth control mandate on "CBS This Morning" Feb. 9. Cardinal-designate Dolan said he expressed his "disappointment and disapproval" when President Barack Obama called him Jan. 20 to notify him that the Department of Health and Human Services was sticking by the contraceptive mandate announced last year but giving religious groups an additional year to comply. After President Obama announced an "accommodation" for religious groups in a noontime statement Feb. 10, the U.S. bishops issued a statement, citing a "the lack of clear protection" for religious employers and insurers "is unacceptable and must be corrected." It also pledged to continue "efforts to correct this problem through the other two branches of government." See more on pages 3 and 10.

YOUNG CATHOLIC VOICE: On a pilgrimage for life... p. 16

LENT IS ALMOST HERE



Several new books offer a wealth of spiritual reading options during Lent. Among them are "The Sacred Heart for Lent: Daily Meditations" by Thomas D. Williams, above; and "A Place at the Table: 40 Days of Solidarity with the Poor" by Chris Seay.



FULL STORY, PAGE 13

NORTH
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Protecting *all* life

It's not easy being a Catholic these days: we have so many responsibilities.

Over the past couple of weeks, we've been reminded of the importance of speaking up for all human life, from conception to natural death. We've proudly watched as youthful Catholic voices led the chorus.

And, over the past few days, we've heard a great deal about the critical importance of defending religious liberty in our nation.

The pages of this week's *NCC* offer a number of helpful tools to live out these obligations.

There's contact information as well as details about the annual Catholic public policy day in Albany. There's also plenty of background information to help us be effective defenders of Catholic teachings.

But, even after we've done everything in our power to protect every human life, we cannot rest. We have yet another moral responsibility: to protect every bit of God's creation

Our popes certainly understood this.

Back in 1990, Pope John Paul II reminded us, "There is an order in the universe which must be respected and the human person, endowed with the capability of

choosing freely, has a grave responsibility to preserve this order for the well-being of future generations... respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God."

And, from Pope Benedict XVI: "Our earth speaks to us and we must listen if we want to survive."

For Catholics, Lent is always a good time to resolve to live better lives. And Lent is almost here.

One option would be to follow a program called Lent 45 which promotes a new way of observing the 40 days, helping us care for God's creation by taking steps to use only our fair share of its resources.

If the earth were divided equally among all seven billion of us, each person would receive 4.5 acres. But it takes 22.3 acres to maintain the average American lifestyle with our food, home, clothing and gadgets.

Moving in the direction of 4.5 is essential for anyone walking in the footsteps of Jesus today.

Nobody can do everything to protect our planet, but everybody can do something.

Check out www.lent45.org and keep up with the *NCC*.

Together we can make a difference for *all* the life that God has entrusted to us.



Mary Lou
Kilian

CHURCH: A FAMILY OF FAITH

A Ministry of Forgiveness
7th Sunday of Ordinary Time - Feb. 18-19

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ
Director of Evangelization

Jesus more than heals. He forgives sin. The story of God's care for His people began with Isaiah's proclamation of salvation on God's part, and it continues into the present. It is a story of salvation or rescue, the forgiveness of sin, and newness. God's love for His people is eternal even though their sinfulness has made them unworthy of His love. God makes no bones about our sinfulness, but He likes to do new things. God's salvation of His people involves ongoing renewal, a newness of life and love that is never exhausted.

He likes us to say as we do before we receive Holy Communion, "I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

What Jesus is offering us as did Isaiah (43) is something new, that is, God forgives. What is important to God more than anything else is our relationship with Him. What Jesus had done with the healing of this man in the Gospel is something that the people had never before experienced. Jesus fulfilled the promise made long ago to the Israelites in Babylon. God kept His word and brought the people back out of exile. The Gospel story showed the power of God in a new way.

Both Isaiah and the Gospel story also make the point that the forgiveness comes from God. We are still a sinful people who are always in need of healing and reconciliation. This is God's doing, "It is I, I who wipe out, for my own sake, your offenses, your sins I remember no more."

Forgiveness of sins goes beyond physical healing. God's forgiveness heals both the mind and heart of each of us who in faith asks for both healing and forgiveness. What we receive is God's peace, the "shalom," the inner experience of a deep loving relationship of wholeness with Him. God is generous with His mercy. This calls forth gratitude from our hearts. Our prayer should be, "We have never seen anything like this" (Mark 2: 12).

As St. Paul says, Jesus is the eternal "Yes" of God. Jesus looks for our "Yes" so that He can do something new and wonderful in us. Jesus' "Yes" to us is always a loving invitation who calls us to draw nearer to Him so that we can go forth in His peace, glorifying the Lord by our lives of compassion and forgiveness towards others.

Our consistent and faithful "Yes" to God builds our own character of living the Christian life. It is not always easy to forgive someone who has hurt us deeply. It is easier to say that "I will forgive" than to actually go before the person to offer the forgiveness. It is God's grace, His initiative, His power to forgive through the Church, the Family of Faith that provides a powerful witness on behalf of God's saving power to His people. God continually offers and speaks an unequivocal "Yes" to every human being, especially when we call upon Him, "Lord, heal my soul, for I have sinned against you" (Ps. 41). When did someone forgive you when you needed it? How have you experienced newness from God in your life? What elements in my life indicate that you have offered a firm "Yes" to Christ?

The season of Lent begins this Wednesday when we will receive ashes to remind us of our need for repentance. As a Church: A Family of Faith, let us begin Lent of renewing our promises to fast, pray, and repent. Being a disciple of Jesus in Mark's Gospel is to "be with Him." Read Mark's Gospel slowly, prayerfully, reflectively, learning to know Jesus, "to be with Him" experiencing His invitation to "Come, follow Me" as His disciple.

Come In From
The Cold

Warm up with a subscription to the *North Country Catholic* and find out what is happening with the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

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RESPECT LIFE

Not Catholic enough

by Kathleen M. Gallagher

Director of Pro-Life Activities
New York State Catholic Conference

Earlier this month, at the National Prayer Breakfast, President Obama spoke at length about "living by the principle that we are our brother and sister's keeper." He spoke of the biblical call to care for the poor and those at the margins of society. "Biblical injunctions," he said, "are not just words; they are also deeds." He talked movingly about his own faith journey, and how it helps to shape so many of his Presidential decisions.

Uh, about that new contraception insurance mandate? Not so much.

You've likely heard about this new requirement, by which the Obama administration is defining some of the fine points of the federal health care reform package enacted two years ago. This new Health and Human Services (HHS) rule will compel all employers, including religious employers, to provide birth control, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drug coverage to all employees. Of course, purchasing such insurance coverage violates the deeply-held religious beliefs of many employers, particularly Catholic employers, which will be forced to comply or face stiff financial penalties.

The Obama administration says that they have provided an adequate religious exemption from the new rule, but adequate it is not. In short, the only church organizations that will be shielded from the insurance

mandate are those which, among other things, are designed to serve only people of their own faith. I can't think of a single church agency that would meet that criterion.

It is an obscene oxymoron to suggest that Catholic agencies are somehow not religious enough because they care for all people in need

Jesus commanded us to "love one another," not to "love only Catholics." If we are to live by the principle that we are our brother and sister's keeper, then Catholic hospitals must tend to the sick, all the sick, be they Protestant, Muslim, Jewish or Catholic. Catholic charitable agencies must be charitable, and keep their doors open to all the destitute, disabled, addicted and oppressed, whether they practice our faith, another faith or no faith at all. Catholic schools and universities cannot eject from their classrooms students of another faith. It would be preposterous if they did.

It is an obscene oxymoron to suggest that Catholic agencies are somehow not religious enough because they care for all people in need.

We here in New York are not unfamiliar with such outrageous and hurtful discriminatory actions. In 2002 state lawmakers passed a similar contraceptive insurance mandate, with a similarly inadequate religious exemption. Since that time, dioceses and

Church agencies have struggled to serve the underserved while remaining true to their ethical principles. Faith-based entities, both Catholic and non-Catholic, brought suit against the state over the mandate, fighting it all the way to the highest court, but ultimately losing the battle. They were denied a hearing in the U.S. Supreme Court. Some Church entities were forced to redesign their insurance programs or move to a federally-regulated system in order to escape the state-imposed requirement. Under the new federal rule, all such avenues of relief will be closed.

Last week's announced "accommodation" by the White House does not do much to soften the blow. The HHS rule remains in effect – indeed, it was finalized in the "compromise" announcement – and a new rule was promised, sometime in the next year, that will "address the religious objections of non-exempted religious organizations." Well, the devil is in the details, and we have no details. Just an outright attack on religious liberty, that continues to stand.

President Obama is rightly proud of the time he spent as a community organizer in Chicago, working with a group of Catholic and other churches in poor neighborhoods to help people find jobs, improve schools and better their families. He has said that it was through this service that he was brought to Christ. He has lived 'faith

in action.' Deep in his heart, he knows that the Bible requires such deeds, and that religious soup kitchens, medical clinics and homeless shelters are simply acting as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, carrying on His ministry in the 21st century.

It is very difficult for me to reconcile this Barack Obama with the one who has completely disregarded the First Amendment rights of Catholics across this country with the new insurance rule. To belittle Catholic service and disrespect Catholic organizations by forcing them to violate their own moral teachings is the height of ideological arrogance.

I do not pass judgment on the President or his religious beliefs. I ask him not to pass judgment on mine and presume to know better than Catholics what our faith does and does not oblige us to do.

All people of good will must raise their voices to stop this assault on religious freedom. If the President will not reverse course, then Congress must. Let your Congressional representatives and U.S. Senators know that the HHS contraception mandate is deeply offensive. Learn more and send messages to Congress by going to www.usccb.org/conscience. If you don't have Internet access, you can call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to your Congressional representative's office.

To Contact Representatives

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Washington D.C. 20510
Phone: 202-224-6542
Fax: 202-228-3027

Diocese Young
Adult Ministry will be
sponsoring an "ONLINE"
Lenten prayer group



Sunday Nights at 9 p.m. during
Lent. Jump on line Sunday
nights and join others as we
pray our way to the Cross.

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If interested please call or
Email Lorraine Turgeon Director
of Young Adult Ministry
315-323 4989
lturgeon@dioogdensburg.org
for more information.

Visit our re-designed website
www.northcountrycatholic.org

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- Search archived papers
- View diocesan events and much more

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Trinity physical education teacher is honored by peers

MASSENA- Donna MacPherson, physical education teacher at Trinity Catholic School, was recognized by fellow Physical Education teachers in the Northern Zone With the "2011 Amazing Person Award."

This recognition is based upon distinguished and notable accomplishments that have made a significant difference in the health and education of students.

Mrs. MacPherson received her bachelor's degree in health and physical education from The College At Brockport and her permanent certification from SUNY Potsdam.

At Trinity Catholic, she is a member of the School Wellness Committee, and in that capacity served as the school's coordinator for completing the School Health Index.

She is an American Council on Exercise, Certified Group Fitness Instructor, Cooper In-

stitute Fitness Specialist, Physical Best Instructor, Certified Spinning Instructor, and licensed Zumba, Zumbatomic and Zumba Gold instructor.

Donna MacPherson receives 2011 'Amazing Person Award'

Utilizing her fitness expertise, Mrs. MacPherson started an after school physical education club and Zumbatomic classes, as well as a fitness group for faculty and staff. She presented at a diocesan wide superintendent's conference day on the use of the P.E. Profile assessment and its affect on the intermediate and elementary levels.

Mrs. McPherson and a colleague created computer-based student portfolios for essential physical education

skills and later presented on the use of these portfolios along with suggestions in designing standards based classes and the importance of performing assessments.

She was a contributor to a grant that was received by the diocese for the advancement of quality physical education classes and for implementation of wellness policies throughout the diocese. She is now actively involved in the work of fulfilling the requirements of the grant.

Joan Rufa, principal of Trinity Catholic, said, "It is no surprise to the faculty, staff, students, and parents of Trinity Catholic that Mrs. MacPherson is an amazing person. The establishment of their second Wellness Week is only one of the hundreds of ways she promotes good health practices at Trinity Catholic School."



Donna MacPherson, PE teacher at Trinity Catholic School, was recognized by fellow Physical Education teachers in the Northern Zone. She received their "2011 Amazing Person Award," which was given at the NYS AHPERD conference. This recognition is based upon distinguished and notable accomplishments that have made a significant difference in the health and education of students.

Bishop administers Confirmation at Akwesasne

ST. REGIS, QUE. - Bishop Terry R. LaValley confirmed 25 mem-

bers of the Church of St. John Francis Regis at Akwesasne

Jan. 15 at the 10 a.m. Mass. The bishop was welcomed

by the new priest of St. Regis Church, Father Jerome Pastores, a diocesan priest of the Diocese of Bayombang, the Philippines, who has been on a sabbatical loan to the Diocese of Valleyfield, Quebec.

Bishop LaValley was the homilist and main celebrant of the Liturgy. Father Jerome Pastores was concelebrant.

Under the direction of their Religious Education instructor, Irving Papineau, the Confirmandi participated fully in the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Turner Lafrance, Celeste Phillips, Nidia DeArmajero, Jennifer DeJung, and Kearin Adams offered the Four Directions Prayer with incense in thanksgiving to the Creator God.

The Readings were done by Tia Mitchell, Emmalie Papineau, and Collin Jacobs.

Blayne Gibson offered the Prayer of the Faithful and Quintana Hart, the prayer for the Canonization of Blessed

Kateri Tekakwitha.

Mara Lazore, Celeste Phillips, and Aliana Hart carried the Offertory gifts to the altar.

The parish organist, Mrs. Minerva White, provided the music for the liturgy.

Mrs. Vickie Phillips, Mrs. Debbie Thomas, Ms. Donna Arbour, and Mr. Irving Papineau of the St. Regis Religious Education Committee planned the liturgy and the reception that followed at the Kateri Hall in Hogansburg. St. Joseph Sister Mary Christine, served as Eucharistic Minister and Noel Norahan, Cole Phillips, Carson Phillips, Amanda Rourke, and Thomas Terrance, as altar servers.

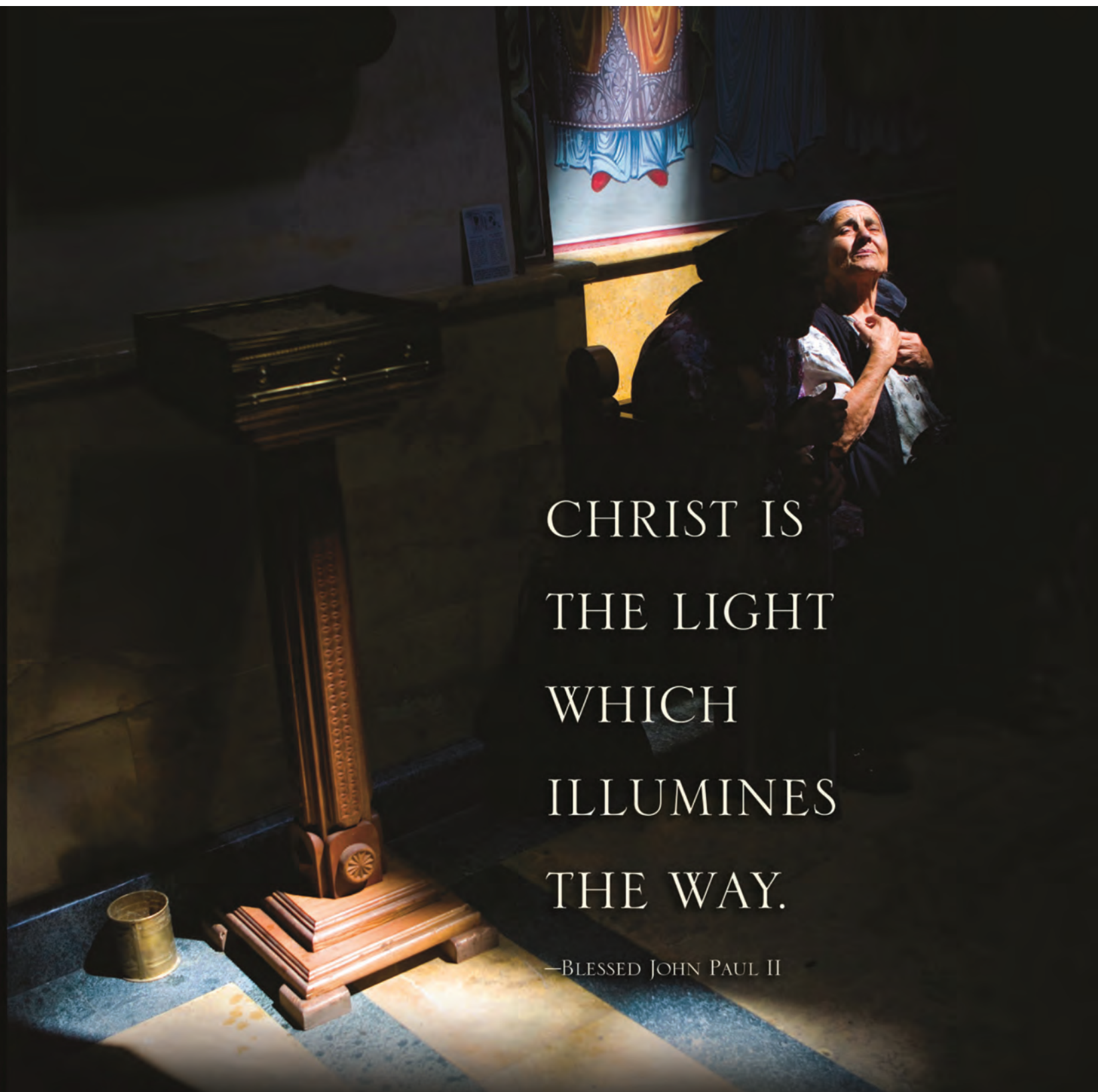
Members of the Knights of Columbus served as honor guard.

In gratitude, the Confirmandi presented a finely crafted Mohawk basket to Bishop LaValley.



Bishop LaValley confirmed 25 members of St. John Francis Regis Parish in Akwesasne. He is shown above with Kearin Adams, Kobryn Chaussi, Nidia DeArmajero, Jennifer DeJung, Tekartha George, Blayne Gibson, Jerry Gibson, Aliana Hart, Colton Hart, Quintana Hart, Collin Jacobs, Nathaniel Jacobs, Teka Jacobs, Elden King, Hailey King, Carly Lafrance, Tatum Lafrance, Turner Lafrance, Mara Lazore, Delia McDonald, Tessa Mitchell, Tia Mitchell, Emmalie Papineau, Celeste Phillips, and Kiana Thompson.

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See more information on pages 8-9 of this week's NCC

'Catholics at the Capitol' set for March 13

The Bishops of New York State will join hundreds of fellow Catholic New Yorkers at the annual Catholics at the Capitol public policy advocacy day March 13, at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany.

Due to a critical meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Administrative Committee that he is chairing in Washington, D.C., that same day, Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan will not be in Albany on March 13. However, he will join his brother bishops at the state Capitol the day before, March

12, meeting with Governor Andrew Cuomo at 11 a.m. and later with legislative leaders.

Cardinal Dolan and bishops of NYS to meet with Gov. Cuomo March 12

Cardinal-designate Dolan (who will be elevated to the College of Cardinals on February 18 in Rome) and the Bishops are expected to discuss with the Governor the various issues on the agenda for the advocacy day the

next day, as well as other issues of mutual concern.

A media availability will be held following the Governor's meeting at a time to be determined.

Issues for the day are as follows:

- Oppose the "Reproductive Health Act" which expands abortion and support the Maternity & Early Childhood Foundation

- Preserve Catholic schools and provide equity for all school children

- Support emergency food programs, affordable housing and increased employ-

ment opportunities for low-income families and individuals

- Support programs that assist incarcerated individuals to successfully return to the community

- Support English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, direct legal services and assistance to recent immigrants on the path toward citizenship

On March 13, participants from all eight dioceses of New York State will attend a workshop on the issues, meet with their legislators, participate in praying the

Rosary with the Knights of Columbus and process to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for 1:30 p.m. Mass with the Bishops.

There is no cost to attend and a boxed lunch will be provided.

A goodwill offering will be taken at Mass to offset the costs of the day.

For more information and to register online, go to www.nyscatholic.org or call 518-434-6195.

The Catholic Conference represents New York State's Bishops in matters of public policy.

40 Days for Life campaign begins Ash Wednesday

By Colleen Miner

Diocesan director, respect life ministry

This spring marks the fifth year of the 40 Days for Life campaign in Plattsburgh.

Nancy Belzile, 40 Days for Life Campaign director, said "I would like to thank all of those who have supported 40 Days for Life in praying and fasting for an end of abortion in our beautiful North Country. If you are reading this message perhaps God has placed it on your heart to pray and fast for the end of abortion. I encourage those of you who have come in the past to keep coming, we are making headway! I invite those who

have thought of coming in past but haven't made it yet, don't delay, join us this year! I especially invite those who are new to the campaign to join us in prayer, we welcome you!"

The spring campaign begins Feb. 22 (Ash Wednesday) at 10 a.m. and continues throughout Lent, concluding with a Jericho Walk on April 1 at 1p.m. The Mid-Point Candlelight Service is set for March 11 at 6:30p.m.

The location of the Plattsburgh 40 Days for Life is 66 Brinkerhoff Street, in front of the red brick Planned Parenthood building.

"While prayers are needed each day (7a.m.-7p.m.), either on site or from your

home, extra prayers are asked on Thursdays which is the day the center has surgical abortions, Belzile said. "Plattsburgh's Planned Parenthood is the only Planned Parenthood in the diocese to have surgical abortions - almost 500 a year."

Sign up for daily prayer at the 40 Days for Life website. www.40DaysforLife.com/plattsburgh. There is also a daily prayer which can be read each day in solidarity with all the 40 Days for Life locations.

Those interested are encouraged to sign up. If a parish, class, youth group, RCIA group or other church group and would like to sponsor one specific hour each week, please inform coordinator, Nancy Belzile at nancys_56@hotmail.com or 518-593-6024.

"Whether alone or with a group, your peaceful presence and prayer at the vigil site makes a difference," Belzile said. "God hears all prayer, especially those of our children. We welcome the children to come to pray. Children are a powerful presence, they are a beautiful witness to life."

Bishop LaValley's schedule

Feb. 19 – 4:30 p.m., Evening Prayer and Dinner with Clinton & Essex Deaneries Priests at St. Joseph's Church in West Chazy.

Feb. 20 – 7:15 p.m., Novena and Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Feb. 21 – 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg.

Feb. 22 – 12:00 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg

Rest in Peace

This week marks the anniversary of the deaths of the following clergymen men who have served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg

Feb. 15 – Msgr. James H. Driscoll, 1928

Feb. 16 – Rev. André Marie Garin, O.M.I., 1895; Rev. Joseph Alexander Fournier, O.M.I., 1904

Feb. 17 – Rev. Joseph A. Hervieux, 1940; Rev. Francis B. Ruddy, 1976

Feb. 18 – Rev. Charles Guillot, M.S.C., 1985

Feb. 19 – Rev. William R. Bourbeau, 1954

Feb. 20 – Rev. Lucian Leger, O.M.I., 1874; Rev. Daniel O'Riordan, O.M.I., 1897

Feb. 21 – Rev. Charles A. Paquette O.M.I., 1925; Rev. John J. Kelly, 1944

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required in order to participate.

Participants may pre-register at www.virtus.org by selecting the registration button and following the directions.

All employees and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities with minor are required to participate in this training.

Further information is available from Atonement Sister Ellen Donahue, 315-393-2920, ext. 440.

Upcoming programs:

March 5 – 4 p.m., St. Mary's School, Ticonderoga

March 6 – 6 p.m., Seton Academy, Plattsburgh

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy Rev. James Seymour at 315-393-2920 or the

Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terri- anne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, PO Box 2446, Plattsburgh, NY, 12901; e-mail: aycsnn@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-569-0612; Fax: 518-425-0401



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OUR READERS WRITE

Vote against abortion

It should come as a surprise to no one that the present federal government would try to force Catholic entities to provide abortion coverage as part of their medical plans. You have to expect that when you elect pro-abortion candidates.

When Catholics go to the polls for any State or Federal election, they should always vote for "the best pro-life candidate available." I'm sure that many Catholic voters would agree with those words; but far too many tend to twist the facts to suit their own purposes.

They'll say things like "my candidate is against capital punishment, therefore he/she qualifies as being 'pro-life'". No matter that they are pro-choice ... if the candidate is against the death penalty, that's good enough to justify voting for them as a "pro-life" candidate.

So, what these voters are saying is "I'll let you abort (kill) the unborn if you don't execute convicted murderers." Or, "I will let you kill the unborn if you promise to help the poor." Or whatever else that the Catholic voter deems to fall under their own personal "pro-life" interpretation.

Therefore, I'd like to change the adage to: "vote for the best anti-abortion candidate available."

If every practicing Catholic voted for the best anti-abortion candidate, we would soon have an abundance of candidates who would truly be pro-life; and we wouldn't have the government trying to force our Catholic entities to abandon their principles.

CALVIN CASTINE
CHAMPLAIN

'The Noise of War'

While my husband was attending seminary in the early 1990s, the Church we were a part of was striding towards an overthrow of many of her traditional teachings. Tolerance, kindness, reasonableness were all touted as the responsible approach to a rapidly changing world.

We started a journey then that continues to this day. My husband is now a priest in the Continuing Anglican church, (but functioning as the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Heuvelton right now!) I was received into the Roman Catholic Church about six years ago, and have never looked back.

However, the current situation reminds me of the tensions felt back in 1991 when I wrote the following sonnet:

The Noise of War in the Camp

A Sonnet

By Amy Williams Schirmer

*They've called for gold with which to form a calf
Sincere yet pagan blood and sweat is giv'n
For fashioning this awesome thing. ('Tis chaff
Thrown high and ineffectually toward heav'n.)
The form's grotesque against the silent sky.
We move the beast inside a golden shrine*

*That's filled with noise and worshippers who cry
For freedom from the ancient ways. A line's
Been crossed. A Book's been burned. And yet
A greater fire rages hot and just,
Fueled by tears from heav'n. We let
It eat the shrine and melt the gold to dust.
We drink our fill of judgment on us poured ---
Our thoughts and hearts' intent pierced by a sword.*

AMY WILLIAMS SCHIRMER
OGDENSBURG

On same-sex marriage

Re: Plattsburgh Press Republican

Winning the award for best editorial in support of same sex marriage is noteworthy.

This reminds me of a problem during my professional years when I gave good grade for well written essays and research papers even though I might disagree with the subject matter.

It is a challenge to respect a writer's right to be wrong. The editorial favoring same sex marriages was wrong. I've never found real evidence that same sex marriages benefit society. Where is the evidence?

JOHN MIDDLETON PH.D
PLATTSBURGH

A time for Socialism?

Now may be a good time to determine the advantages of Socialism for Catholics. The elephant is in the room and it's feeding time. Socialism places the needs of the masses above the excesses of the elite. Socialism is a Catholic doctrine of helping those who are: poor, immigrants, lacking medical insurance, inept golden years savers, missing an education by not affording an expensive private education, unable to find suitable work, and children in unsuitable families.

A central socially-conscious provider is not only a good American solution but also a good Catholic solution to our current national problems. Just because there is a minor Catholic problem with socialized health insurance requirements, this is not the time to attack all of the other fine results that socialism is bringing to the United States.

It is about time that the Catholic Church gets serious about Socialism.

CLAYTON LUCE
OLD FORGE

A country in freefall

A "law" is described in Webster's as "... all the rules of conduct established by the authority or custom of a nation; obedience to such rules; a sequence of natural events occurring with unvarying uniformity under the same conditions..." etc.

There have been innumerable laws enacted throughout our nation's

history with varying degrees of success or failure depending on their purpose and intent. Whether laws are good ones or bad ones, the federal government is always as heavy-handed as they want to be in enforcing them, even if they are wrong in doing so.

For example, there are two laws presently in place which distinctly characterize a nation in freefall. One is the "Bald and Gold Eagle Protection Act" of 1940; the other is the "Roe vs. Wade" decision of 1973.

The 1940 Gold Eagle law actually (and I quote) "... prohibits the take, possession, sale, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, of any bald or golden eagle, alive or dead, including any part, nest, or egg, unless allowed by permit (16 U.S.C. 668(a); 50 CFR 22). "Take" includes pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb (16 U.S.C. 668c; 50 CFR 22.3)."

In 1972, amendments to this law further imposed (and I quote) "... increased civil penalties for violating provisions of the Act to a maximum fine of \$5,000 or one year imprisonment with \$10,000 or not more than two years in prison for a second conviction. Felony convictions carry a maximum fine of \$250,000 or two years of imprisonment. The fine doubles for an organization. Rewards are provided for information leading to arrest and conviction for violation of the Act." (Note: the bald eagle has been "delisted" under the Endangered Species Act.)

By contrast, the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision and its companion Doe v. Bolton (i.e. throughout all nine months of pregnancy) affords no rights, no protections and no voices for innocent human lives being slaughtered by abortionists nationwide.

Although this law was passed illegally by the Supreme Court (documented), it freely permits and sanctions the killing of babies in a mother's womb at any time, for any reason — or for no reason.

There are no doctors who can save them, no lawyers to represent them and no police to protect them. This law is an irrevocable death sentence on innocent human life. Furthermore, there are no penalties, no fines and no imprisonment imposed on perpetrators.

So, today the bald eagle is the most protected of all existing species of creatures in the United States of America.

It surpasses homo-sapiens status, as well as every water, land and air genus known to exist. Simply put, the Bald Eagle Act was enacted to stop killing the bird in the nest; Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton were enacted to permit killing the baby in the womb. It's nicknamed "choice." What a country!

MICHAEL MAREK
OGDENSBURG

Letters to the Editor

Send letters to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669 or e-mail to news@northcountrycatholic.org

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Tuesday, March 13, 2012 is a significant day for Catholics in New York State. It's the day you can join the Bishops of New York State and over 1,000 Catholics from throughout the state to speak with your legislators in Albany. We urge you to accept this invitation to gather with them in raising your voice for public policies that support the dignity and worth of each person.

Register today at:
www.nyscatholic.org

Just click on Public Policy Day 2012 at the top of the home page. You will find directions for registering to attend the Public Policy Day. After you register, a representative from Catholic Charities in Ogdensburg will contact you for additional details and information.

You must be registered to attend

The Official Public Policy Voice of the Catholic Church in the Empire State
Come to the New Your State Catholic Conference's

2012 PUBLIC POLICY DAY

TUESDAY, MARCH 13 at the STATE CAPITAL in ALBANY



TAKE ACTION

About Us

The New York State Catholic Conference represents the Bishops of New York State in matters of Public Policy. The role of the Conference is to seek justice, fairness and charity for all, with a particular emphasis on the poor and vulnerable.

Our positions transcend political platforms or ideologies. The Conference is neither Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative. Our positions are based on the principles of Catholic social teaching and recognition of the innate dignity of every human person made in the image and likeness of God.

The Conference advocates for the agenda of the Bishops as it relates to state government. We seek to work in partnership with the state to fashion public policies that respect the human person from conception until natural death. Our positions and statements are made with malice toward none and charity toward all.

Mission Statement

The mission of the New York State Catholic Conference is to identify, formulate and implement the public policy objectives of the Catholic Bishops of New York State. As one body, the Conference provides a unified voice and the means for joint action through which the eight Catholic dioceses in the 63-county state can impact the development of public policies in the areas of health, education, welfare, human and civil rights.

The Conference seeks to fulfill the vision of the Vatican Council II, which called on the Church to be more involved in the world, and the call of Pope John Paul II in Centesimus Annus for Catholics to become personally involved in and committed to transforming the public policy process to better serve the needy and vulnerable.

The primary objective of the Conference is to reaffirm the sacredness of human life, demonstrating that "the human person is central, the clearest reflection of God among us" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). Thus the policies pursued by the Conference seek to enhance human dignity, foster the common good, and provide for the fulfillment of individual potential from conception to natural death.

With the Gospels and the social teachings of the Church as its foundation, the New York State Catholic Conference offers a specifically Catholic contribution to state and federal public policy debates. It achieves this by:

- working with the three branches of government to fashion laws, regulations and policies which respect human life, meet human needs, and serve the common good;
- speaking officially for the Church before government bodies and private organizations;
- providing a forum for Church personnel to meet, exchange information, deliberate and recommend policies or actions to the Bishops;
- studying all aspects of pressing social and moral questions and fostering public understanding of the Church's teachings;
- highlighting the moral dimensions of critical public issues;
- encouraging Catholic citizens to communicate with their elected representatives regarding the Church's concerns;
- working in cooperation with other faith groups and advocacy organizations to ensure that the needs of all New Yorkers are met.

THIS IS IMPORTANT... You want to know about this!

You are invited to join

New York State Catholic Conference Public Policy Network

- Keep informed of the current issues that are important to the Church.
 - There is no cost for membership.
 - You will receive Legislative Alerts.
 - With just a click you can make your voice heard in Albany.
- It is easy to join by visiting the New York Sate Catholic Conference website: www.nyscatholic.org

Put Your Catholic Faith Into Action!

- Demonstrate the strength and unity of the Catholic voice to state lawmakers.
- Learn about and advocate on critical social issues impacting our state.
- Worship at Mass with the State's Catholic Bishop's.
- Meet with Legislators, attend Senate and Assembly Committee meetings, watch your lawmakers in action.

Issues in brief...

Radical Abortion Bill:

Oppose Abortion and Support Pregnant Women.

Preserving Catholic Schools:

Accessibility to Catholic schools and equity for all school children.

Protect the Poor:

Support emergency food programs, affordable housing and increased employment opportunities for low-income families and individuals.

Community Reintegration:

Support programs that prepare and assist incarcerated individuals to successfully return to the community.

Assistance for Immigrants:

Support English as a Second Language instruction, direct legal services and assistance to recent immigrants on the path toward citizenship.

Other Issues include:

- Religious Liberty
- Respect Life
- Marriage and Family Life
- Human Services
- Criminal Justice
- Health Care

JOIN THE NETWORK!

LOVE IMPLIES JUSTICE Catholics at the Capital



You are invited to join your voice with those of the Bishops of New York State and over 1,000 Catholics in Albany. Your participation is needed to demonstrate the strength of Catholic convictions to your state lawmakers. The day will include delegations to speak with legislators, workshops on the issues, a special prayer gathering with the Knights of Columbus, and a Rosary Procession from the Convention Center to the Cathedral for Mass. You can find information about the 2012 Legislative Agenda, review the You Tube summary and register at www.nyscatholic.org

Schedule of Events

8:30 a.m. Registration Opens (Outside Convention Center)

New York State Catholic Conference staff will be at registration tables to check you in, provide materials and answer questions.

9:00 a.m. Legislative Meetings Begin (Legislative Office Building and State Capitol)

Some participants will attend pre-scheduled meetings with elected representatives throughout the day.

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Workshop: Training on the Issues

Meeting Room 6, Empire State Plaza

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Knights of Columbus Rosary/Prayer Rally (Convention Center)

Bishops will welcome participants and the New York State Council of the K of C, who will be praying the Rosary for all those advocating with lawmakers. Come join them!

11:30 a.m. Lunch Available

1:00 p.m. Rosary Procession

From the Convention Center to the Cathedral led by the Knights of Columbus

1:30 p.m. Mass (Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Madison Ave)

3:00 p.m. Buses Depart Madison Avenue

After President Obama announces new plan for contraceptive coverage: Bishops renew call for religious liberty

By Catholic News Service

In a statement released Friday night on President Obama's noontime announcement of a new plan for mandatory contraceptive coverage in health insurance plans, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said the "only complete solution" to the religious liberty implications of the insurance mandate "is for HHS to rescind the mandate of these objectionable services."

Titled "Bishops Renew Call To Legislative Action On Religious Liberty," the 700-word statement expanded on an earlier statement the same day saying the Obama announcement might be "a first step in the right direction" but that the conference still had concerns and reserved "judgment on the details until we have them."

The second statement is a much more detailed analysis of the new plan.

It notes that what it calls "the lack of clear protection" for religious employers and insurers "is unacceptable and must be corrected."

It also pledged to continue "efforts to correct this problem through the other two branches of government."

Text of bishops' statement

Here is the full text of the Friday night statement:

The Catholic bishops have long supported access to life-affirming healthcare for all, and the conscience rights of everyone involved in the complex process of providing that healthcare. That is why we raised two serious objections to the "preventive services" regulation issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in August 2011.

First, we objected to the rule forcing private health plans — nationwide, by the stroke of a bureaucrat's pen—to cover sterilization and contraception, including drugs that may cause abor-

tion. All the other mandated "preventive services" prevent disease, and pregnancy is not a disease. Moreover, forcing plans to cover abortifacients violates existing federal conscience laws.

Therefore, we called for the rescission of the mandate altogether.

The only complete solution to the religious liberty implications of the insurance mandate is for HHS to rescind the mandate of these objectionable services

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Second, we explained that the mandate would impose a burden of unprecedented reach and severity on the consciences of those who consider such "services" immoral: insurers forced to write policies including this coverage; employers and schools forced to sponsor and subsidize the coverage; and individual employees and students forced to pay premiums for the coverage.

We therefore urged HHS, if it insisted on keeping the mandate, to provide a conscience exemption for all of these stakeholders—not just the extremely small subset of "religious employers" that HHS proposed to exempt initially.

Today, the President has done two things.

First, he has decided to retain HHS's nationwide mandate of insurance coverage of sterilization and contraception, including some abortifacients. This is both unsupported in the law and remains a grave moral concern.

We cannot fail to reiterate this, even as so many would focus exclusively on the question of religious liberty.

Second, the President has announced some changes in how that mandate will be ad-

ministered, which is still unclear in its details.

As far as we can tell at this point, the change appears to have the following basic contours:

- It would still mandate that all insurers must include coverage for the objectionable services in all the policies they would write. At this point, it would appear that self-insuring religious employers, and religious insurance companies, are not exempt from this mandate.

- It would allow non-profit, religious employers to declare that they do not offer such coverage. But the employee and insurer may separately agree to add that coverage.

The employee would not have to pay any additional amount to obtain this coverage, and the coverage would be provided as a part of the employer's policy, not as a separate rider.

- Finally, we are told that the one-year extension on the effective date (from August 1, 2012 to August 1, 2013) is available to any non-profit religious employer who desires it, without any government application or approval process.

These changes require careful moral analysis, and moreover, appear subject to some measure of change. But we note at the outset that the lack of clear protection for key stakeholders—for self-insured religious employers; for religious and secular for-profit employers; for secular non-profit employers; for religious insurers; and for individuals—is unacceptable and must be corrected.

And in the case where the employee and insurer agree to add the objectionable coverage, that coverage is still provided as a part of the objecting employer's plan, financed in the same way as the rest of the coverage offered by the objecting employer.

This, too, raises serious moral concerns.

We just received informa-



CNS PHOTO/LARRY DOWNING, REUTERS

U.S. President Barack Obama makes a statement at the White House in Washington Feb. 10 about the federal mandate on contraceptive coverage. He outlined a plan that would allow religious employers not to offer such services to their employees but would compel insurance companies to do so. The response of the U.S. bishops, released Friday night, appears on this page.

tion about this proposal for the first time this morning; we were not consulted in advance. Some information we have is in writing and some is oral. We will, of course, continue to press for the greatest conscience protection we can secure from the Executive Branch. But stepping away from the particulars, we note that today's proposal continues to involve needless government intrusion in the internal governance of religious institutions, and to threaten government coercion of religious people and groups to violate their most deeply held convictions.

In a nation dedicated to religious liberty as its first and founding principle, we should not be limited to ne-

gotiating within these parameters.

The only complete solution to this religious liberty problem is for HHS to rescind the mandate of these objectionable services.

We will therefore continue—with no less vigor, no less sense of urgency—our efforts to correct this problem through the other two branches of government.

For example, we renew our call on Congress to pass, and the Administration to sign, the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act.

And we renew our call to the Catholic faithful, and to all our fellow Americans, to join together in this effort to protect religious liberty and freedom of conscience for all.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Gov't has no authority to redefine marriage, say Catholic leaders

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The archbishops of Los Angeles and New York criticized a federal appellate court decision Feb. 7 that ruled unconstitutional California's Proposition 8, a 2008 voter-approved initiative that forbade same-sex marriage in the state. "The government has no competence and no authority to 'redefine' marriage or 'expand' its definition to include other kinds of relationships," said Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles in a Feb. 7 statement. "To do that is to say that marriage no longer exists. And this would have grave consequences for children and for the common good of our society. Our government has a vital interest in promoting marriage for two reasons," Archbishop Gomez said. "First, because marriage is the foundation of society. Second, because government has a duty to promote the well-being of children, who have the right to be born and raised in a family with both their mother and their father." He added, "This debate over marriage is not about equality or about the needs of individuals. It is much bigger than that. It is about the nature of the human person and the nature of society." Cardinal-designate Timothy M. Dolan of New York called the 2-1 decision by a three-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals "a grave injustice, ignoring the reality that marriage is the union of one man and one woman" in a Feb. 7 statement. "The Constitution of the United States most assuredly does not forbid the protection of the perennial meaning of marriage, one of the cornerstones of society," said Cardinal-designate Dolan, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "The people of California deserve better. Our nation deserves better. Marriage deserves better."

New study examines factors that spur growth of US congregations

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- A new study of U.S. congregations found that some factors are more prevalent than others in spurring the growth of a congregation, among them the age of a congregation's members, family activities and a commitment to recruiting new members. But the study's author noted that only a minority of congregations of all denominations are actually growing. "There were about 30-35 percent that were experiencing the highest level of growth," said C. Kirk Hadaway, congregational research officer for the Episcopal Church and chair of the research task force for the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership, the study's sponsors. "There's as many congregations that are plateaued and declining (as) are experiencing rapid growth," Hadaway said during a Jan. 31 webinar on the study, "Facts on Growth." He added: "A relatively small percentage of congregations are sort of driving the growth to the extent that is occurring in U.S. society. It's not really clear to what extent growth is occurring." Hadaway said that of the congregations surveyed, only 6.4 percent were either Catholic or Orthodox, but that the numbers were weighted to reflect their proportion in the U.S. population. "Facts on Growth" is the fourth in a series of national congregational surveys that began in 2000. The sample for this latest study included 11,077 congregations. Faiths represented included the Catholic Church, United Methodist Church, Southern Baptist Convention, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Church of the Nazarene, Baha'i faith, Episcopal Church, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, Muslim, Orthodox and Jewish congregations, and nondenominational and black churches.

VATICAN LETTER

Don't wait for explosion:

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - The take-away message from a Vatican-backed symposium on clerical sex abuse was clear: Victims, truth and justice come first. And the church can no longer wait for a crisis to erupt before it begins to address the scandal of abuse.

Speakers at Vatican-backed symposium say church must prevent abuse

"We do not need to wait for a bomb to explode. Preventing it from exploding is the best response," said Philippine Archbishop Luis Tagle.

The archbishop of Manila was one of more than 200 bishops, cardinals, priests, religious and laypeople who attended a landmark symposium Feb. 6-9 in Rome.

The conference aimed to inspire and educate bishops' conferences around the world as they seek to comply with a Vatican mandate to establish anti-abuse guidelines by May.

U.S. Cardinal William J. Levada, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the office that issued the mandate, said more than 4,000 cases of sexual abuse have been reported to the doctrinal office the past decade. Those cases revealed that an exclusively canonical response to the crisis has been inadequate, he said, and that a multifaceted and more proactive approach by all bishops and religious orders is needed.

Countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Germany are among those with the most comprehensive and binding guidelines or norms, Cardinal Levada said.

"But in many cases such response came only in the wake of the revelation of scandalous behavior by priests in the public media," he added.

Learning the hard way, after generations of children and vulnerable adults are harmed and traumatized, shouldn't be the norm, symposium participants said.

"Does each country around the world have to go through this same agonizing process?" asked Msgr. Stephen Rossetti, clinical associate professor of pastoral studies at The Catholic University of America, Washington.

Hard lessons over the decades have taught the church the essential elements of an effective child-protection program, Msgr. Rossetti said, but such standards need to be implemented today around the world.

Not all bishops or superiors are fully on board, he said, as some believe that no

abuse has happened or will happen under their watch.

"It is kind of like moving a mountain," trying to convince everyone that addressing abuse with swift and effective programs is an urgent obligation.

"It's not just changing a few policies, it's a change in the way people think about these issues, and that takes a cultural shift," he said.

That kind of conversion did happen at the conference, he said, for church officials who had never heard a victim speak in person about his or her trauma and concerns.

Marie Collins, an abuse survivor from Ireland, said having her abuser's superiors shift the blame onto her and fail to stop the perpetrator caused her more pain and shock than the abuse itself.

At the symposium's start, Collins said that she wanted the church to listen and respect victims and take their accusations seriously.

She said hearing a church leader ask for forgiveness for shielding abusers was critical to healing, and she wanted to make sure there would be consequences for anyone who did not adhere to church norms.

It appeared that symposium attendees and organizers were listening.

Canada's Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and 10 other bishops led a solemn penitential service Feb. 7, in which they asked forgiveness for failing to protect children and serving instead as an "instrument of evil against them."

The bishops included Cardinal Sean Brady, primate of All Ireland, who two years ago apologized for having failed to report an abuser priest to the police in the 1970s.

The Vatican's top investigator of clerical sex abuse, Msgr. Charles Scicluna, didn't leave any wiggle room when it comes to complying with church and civil laws.

Everyone, especially the lay faithful, he said, needs to develop the confidence "to denounce the sin when it happens and to call it a crime - because it is a crime - and to do something about it."

The "deadly culture of silence, or 'omerta,' is in itself wrong and unjust," Msgr. Scicluna said, and bishops have a duty to cooperate fully with civil authority when civil laws are broken.

Experts, too, insisted that listening to victims and putting truth, justice and their safety must be the top concerns of all church leaders.

Msgr. Rossetti told Catholic News Service that if there had ever been any doubt about the Vatican's position, "those days are over."

The pope and the Vatican are "all on the same page, and so that's a powerful message to every bishop in the world," Msgr. Rossetti said.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Preparing for arrival of Lent on Ash Wednesday

Today's readings should prepare us quite well for the beginning of the Lenten season this Wednesday.

We've just gotten comfortable with a few relaxed weeks following the Christmas season. There have been very few challenges to our life-style as Catholics in the "ordinary time".

We're hardly ready to make any changes - and we may even be in danger of slipping back into some old sinful patterns.

Human nature, when left without a challenge, is all too happy to settle for inertia.

That was exactly the condition of the Israelites during the Babylonian captivity. Instead of repentance for the sins that had brought them into God's disfavor,

they had begun to accommodate themselves to the pagan lifestyle of their captors.

Then God's prophet tried to change all that!

In today's first reading, God challenges them through the prophet whom we call "Second Isaiah".

He invites His people to leave their slavery in Babylon, and start all over again to live a new life of fidelity to the

Law back in Jerusalem.

In order to entice them, He says, "See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert, I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers."

God is inviting them to take the straight road through the desert back to Jerusalem.

Within a few years, this prophecy would be fulfilled when Darius of Persia, the new ruler of Babylon, released them from their slavery). Now, many of them were reluctant to leave. They weren't ready for change!

Fortunately, many of them did happily return and built a new Temple to the one God of Israel.

The positive tone of today's first reading is echoed in the second reading, when St. Paul assures the Corinthians that God never goes back on His promises. He is not "yes" one moment, and "no" the next. He is all "yes"!

What a reassuring passage. It provides a firm basis for our trusting God under all circumstances.

Today's Gospel narrates the astounding incident of the four friends of a paralytic letting him down through the roof of the

Feb. 19

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Isaiah 43:18-19, 21-22, 24b-25

2 Corinthians 1:18-22

Mark 2:1-12

house where Jesus was staying in Capharnaum.

When the villagers heard that Jesus was "at home", they had all crowded into the house, making it impossible for any late-comer to enter. Imagine the astonishment of all in the house when a shower of straw and mortar comes raining down on their heads, followed by a paralytic on a pallet.

When Jesus sees the emaciated form in front of his eyes, he is filled with pity, and, addressing the man as "child", he tells him that his sins are forgiven.

Immediately, the Phar-

isees accuse Jesus of blasphemy, for they rightly add, "Only God can forgive sins."

To back up the authority by which He makes this claim, Jesus then heals the paralytic before the eyes of all assembled.

If only the Pharisees were not blinded by their own fear of Jesus, they might have given assent to Jesus' claim to be the "Son of Man" early on in His ministry.

What a difference that would have made!

How lucky the paralytic was to have such loyal friends. We might ask ourselves this week if there are people in our lives that we need to bring to Jesus for healing?

And, of course, we need to ask ourselves if we are ready to make changes in our lives this Lent.

It's time for that wonderful hymn we will sing on Wednesday, "We rise again from ashes!"

PURSUING JUSTICE

NYS State Catholics support: strong marriages

Fourth in a series

The bishops of the eight dioceses of New York have released the New York State Catholic Conference 2012 Legislative Agenda. Among the legislative priorities is to "Strengthen and Preserve Marriage

Summary

In 2010, New York State became the final state in the country to legalize no-fault

divorce. The NYS Catholic Conference opposed this legalization and believes it will result in an increased number of divorces and all of the significant negative consequences that divorce brings.

Conference Position

The New York State Catholic Conference supports efforts to strengthen and preserve marriage, de-

fining as the lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. Recommendations to accomplish this goal are noted below.

Rationale

A growing consensus confirms that children raised outside of intact marriages are at higher risk for experiencing higher rates of poverty, welfare dependency, crime, school failure, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency and adult criminality, mental illness and emotional distress, domestic violence, unwed teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, poor qual-

ity family relationships, and child abuse.

Adults, too, benefit from marriage. Married people live longer, healthier lives with higher levels of emotional well-being and lower rates of mental illness and emotional distress, and they make more money than otherwise similar singles. Many social, economic and psychological benefits of strong marriages flow to government and society as well.

The Catholic Conference encourages initiatives to strengthen marriage and reduce unnecessary divorce. Such initiatives include incentives from government such as a reduction in marriage license fees/waiting period, an increase in the child tax credit, and a reduction in marriage "penalties" such as those in the tax laws and welfare programs.

The Conference urges pre-marital education in conflict management, communication skills, and financial responsibilities, and the possibility of a high school requirement course in marriage and relationship skills. An explicit pro-marriage message should be added to all family life/health education programs.

For interested couples, particularly low-income couples, the government should consider vouchers/tax deductions/referrals for marriage education, mentoring, counseling and divorce education/mediation programs that are designed to reconcile the spouses, rather than merely ease the procedural process of divorce.

(This message is reprinted from www.nyscatholic.org)

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AT THE MOVIES

THE VOW

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

Poor Channing Tatum! Though he isn't gone, he is forgotten in "The Vow" (Screen Gems), director and co-writer Michael Sucsy's well-intentioned but flawed love story based on real events.

Tatum plays Chicago recording engineer Leo, whose romance with -- and marriage to -- artist Paige (Rachel McAdams) have made him a happy man. That all changes, however, when a car accident injures them both, and leaves Paige stricken with partial amnesia.

She awakens from a coma with no memory of their idyllic courtship or successful life together.

Instead, she has mentally reverted to her pre-Leo days as a law school student engaged to go-getter ex-fiance Jeremy (Scott Speedman).

When her estranged parents, Rita (Jessica Lange)

and Bill (Sam Neill), appear on the scene, it develops that Paige also has lost all recollection of the traumatic events that led her to separate from them.

Leo sets out to win Paige's heart all over again. But Rita and Bill are angling to put their bewildered daughter back on the path to a legal career and drive her back into the arms of conventionally respectable Jeremy.

As penned by Sucsy in collaboration with Abby Kohn, Marc Silverstein and Jason Katims, this romantic drama certainly celebrates Leo's extraordinarily determined marital fidelity.

And it manages to strike a generally amiable tone as it does so.

But characterizations are shallow: Mildly bohemian Leo, for example, takes on his conniving 1-percenter in-laws, who we know must be evil because they, um, occupy an Architectural Digest-worthy home in Lake Forest.

The tale's credibility -- and therefore its impact -- is also

undercut by the excessive cuteness of the initial relationship between Leo and Paige. They're shown popping chocolates into each other's mouths and they later write out their self-composed wedding vows on menus from their favorite eatery.

Presumably in a nod to Paige's profession, those promises are exchanged, not in a church or even at city hall but in a museum gallery. A friend of the bride and groom's, who has somehow gotten himself temporarily vested with the necessary power by the state of Illinois, presides.

The film contains brief nongraphic marital love-making, a premarital situation, fleeting rear nudity, an adultery theme, numerous sexual references and jokes, at least one use of profanity as well as a couple of rough and about a half-dozen crude terms.

The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rat-



CNS PHOTO/SONY

Channing Tatum and Rachel McAdams star in a scene from the movie "The Vow."

ing is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned.

Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13

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New spiritual reading options for Lent

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Here is a selection of recent releases that might be suitable for your spiritual reading during Lent, which begins Feb. 22:

- "The Essentials of Catholic Spirituality: Living and Breathing Our Faith" by Father Joseph F. Classen. Alba House (Staten Island, N.Y., 2012). 197 pp., \$12.95.

- "Rediscover Lent" by Matthew Kelly. St. Anthony Messenger Press (Cincinnati, 2011). 146 pp., \$9.99.

- "The Sacred Heart for Lent: Daily Meditations" by Thomas D. Williams. St. Anthony Messenger Press (Cincinnati, 2011). 118 pp., \$12.99.

- "Simplifying the Soul: Lenten Practices to Renew Your Spirit" by Paula Huston. Ave Maria Press (Notre Dame,

Ind., 2011). 192 pp., \$14.95.

- "A Place at the Table: 40 Days of Solidarity with the Poor" by Chris Seay. Baker Books (Ada., Mich., 2012). 208 pp., \$13.99.

- "Lent with the Saints: Daily Reflections" by Greg Friedman, OFM. St. Anthony Messenger Press (Cincinnati, 2011). 96 pp., \$3.99.

- "A Cardinal Newman Prayer Book: Heart to Heart" by John Henry Newman, with foreword by Cyril O'Regan. Ave Maria Press (Notre Dame, Ind., 2011). 288 pp., \$15.95.

- "A Year with the Angels: Daily Meditations with the Messengers of God" by Mike Aquilina. St. Benedict Press (Charlotte, N.C., 2011). 365 pp., \$44.95.

- "5 Minutes with Christ: Spiritual Nourishment for

Busy Teachers," edited by Lou DeFra, CSC, and Ann Primus Berends. Ave Maria Press (Notre Dame, Ind., 2011). 207 pp., \$12.95.

- "What the Saints Said About Heaven: 101 Holy Insights About Everlasting Life" by Ronda Chervin, Richard Ballard and Ruth Ballard. TAN Books (Charlotte, N.C., 2011). 244 pp., \$12.95.

- "Grace Notes" by Brian Doyle. ACTA Publications (Chicago, 2011). 150 pp., \$14.95.

- "Homegrown Faith: Nurturing Your Catholic Family" by Heidi Bratton. Servant Books (Cincinnati, 2011). 196 pp., \$15.99.

- "Legacy of Love: Biblical Wisdom for Parenting Teens and Young Adults" by Kimberly Hahn. Servant Books

(Cincinnati, 2011). 247 pp., \$14.99.

- "Happiness" by Joan Chittister. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2011). 244 pp., \$20.

- "Looking for Answers Through Dirty Glasses: Finding the Divine in a Challenging World" by Matt Kuntz. CreateSpace (Seattle, 2011). 169 pp., \$11.99



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CLINTON

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Peru - St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus Council will host a spaghetti dinner.

Date: Feb. 18

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30

Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center

Prices: \$7.50 per person, \$3.50 for children 6 to 12, free for children 5 and under. Take-outs are available

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

West Chazy - St. Joseph's Men's Club presents their Annual All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast.

Date: March 11

Time: 8 a.m. to Noon

Place: Parish Center.

Cost: \$6; Children 5 and under, free.

ASH WEDNESDAY FISH FRY

AuSable Forks - The Knights of Columbus Council 2301 will be sponsoring their annual Ash Wednesday Fish Fry.

Date: Feb. 22

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: Holy Name Church school gym.

Cost: Adults, \$8; Child, \$5; \$1 off with donation to food pantry.

SOAKING PRAYER

Ellenburg - Our Lady of the Adirondacks will be having a Soaking Prayer.

Date: Feb. 20

Time: 10 a.m. to 11

Features: This is the hour to come and be immersed in individual prayer time
RSVP: olaprayrhouse@gmail.com or 518-594-3253

LENTEN REFLECTION SERIES

Ellenburg - Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of prayer will have Lenten Reflection Series the Fridays of Lent.

Date: Feb. 24-March 30

Time: 1 p.m. to 3

Features: Meditating on the Sunday Bible readings, Adoration, Rosary.

RSVP: By Feb. 21 to olaprayrhouse@gmail.com or 518-594-3253

CORNEBEEF AND CABBAGE

Peru - CDA Court St. Monica will hold a Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner.

Date: March 10

Time: 4 p.m. to 6:30

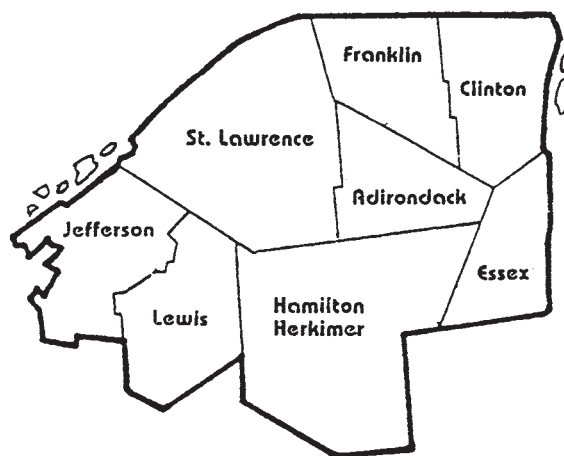
Place: St. Augustine's Parish

Cost: \$8; Children ages 12 and under, \$4

Contact: Helen Bisallion at 643-2638 or Christa Reyell at 566-6404

LIVING WATERS HEALING MINISTRY

Plattsburgh - A weekly prayer meeting will be held every Wednesday (except



The North Country Catholic welcomes contributions to "Around the Diocese."

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,
Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 315-394-0670;
e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

Items must be received in the NCC office by the Thursday before publication.

the first Wednesday).

Time: 7 p.m. to 8

Place: St. Peter's Church

SOAKING PRAYER

Plattsburgh - Soaking Prayer is offered every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month under the direction of the Living Water's Healing Ministry.

Time: 10 a.m. to 11:30

Place: Upper room at St. Peters

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Plattsburgh - Eucharistic Adoration is held throughout the year every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Place: St. John's Adoration Chapel,

Time: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Contact: call 518-561-5083 or email us at Sjohnsadoration@aol.com

ESSEX

ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

Elizabethtown - St. Elizabeth's Church, will hold a St. Patrick's Day Dinner, featuring corned beef and cabbage or ham

Date: March 11

Time: 2 p.m. to 6

Place: parish hall

Cost: Adults: \$9. Children under 12: \$5. Take-outs will be available after 1:30 p.m. Tickets for a cash raffle and other items will be available.

ADULT FAITH SHARING GROUP

Port Henry - The Adult Faith Sharing Group will be viewing Fr. Robert Barron's video series "Conversation".

Dates: Feb. 23; March 8 & 22

Time: 7 p.m. to 8:30

FRANKLIN

MYSTERY/DINNER THEATER

Brushton - St. Mary's Church is to present "The Hilarious Hillbilly Massacre", an interactive murder mystery/dinner theater performed by The North Franklin Theater Group.

Date: March 3 and March 24

Time: 6 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: \$25 per person

Contact: Eileen Miller at 518-529-7713 (leave message) to make reservations by Feb. 22 (for March 3 show) and March 14 (March 24 show).

JEFFERSON

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Watertown - St. Anthony's Altar Rosary Church will be having Spaghetti Supper.

Date: Feb. 23

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7; Take-out orders begin at 4 p.m.

Place: Msgr. Sechi Hall

Cost: Adults, \$8; children \$4.50; under 3, free; sauce, \$5 per quart meatballs are \$.75; Please bring your own containers

GET OUT OF DEBT

Clayton - A 13 week program will be held to help you get out of debt.

Date: beginning Feb. 29

Place: St. Mary's Church

Cost: \$99.50

Features: Through this program you will learn how to clear up your debt, pay off your mortgage and get debt free and plan for the future. Classes run for 13

weeks and those enrolled will learn the secrets to living debt free. Classes taught by Dave Ramsey.

Contact: Bruce and Liz Daugherty at 315-686-4884 or e-mail norwichrugby-mom@gmail.com. Enrollment must be made by Feb. 15.

BEREAVEMENT MEETING

Watertown - An ecumenical bereavement meeting will be held.

Date: Feb. 27

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse

Program: Sister Mary Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ who is currently involved in adult spiritual formation, will speak on "Finding a Way through Grief."

LIFERIGHT MEETING

Watertown - Liferight of Watertown, a pro-life educational organization will hold its monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month.

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: 312 Sherman St.

Contact: Phone 315-788-8480; website: www.liferight.org.

LEWIS

K OF C BRUNCH

Lyons Falls - The South Lewis Knights of Columbus will be having an all you can eat brunch.

Date: Feb. 19

Time: 8 a.m. to noon

Place: St. John's Church Hall

Cost: Adults, \$6; Children 5-12, \$3; under 5, free

MARDI GRAS DINNER

Port Leyden - St. Martin's Parish will hold a Mardi Gras dinner.

Date: Feb. 17

Time: 5 p.m.

Place: St. Martin's Church Hall

Cost: Adults, \$8; Children, \$4

Features: Take-outs will be available by calling 348-6738 or 377-3111.

MARDI GRAS

Constableville - The 7th Annual Spaghetti Dinner (Mardi Gras) to be held sponsored by St. Mary's Parish Council.

Date: Feb. 19

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Cost: Adults, \$8; Children 5-8, \$5; under 5, Free; Take-outs, \$8

ST. LAWRENCE

LENTEN SOUP MEAL

Heuvelton - St. Raphael's Parish is hold-

ing a Lenten soup meal.

Date: March 12

Time: 11:45 a.m.

Place: St. Raphael's Parish Hall

Features: Fr. Jay Seymour, Pastor, will speak about his 500 mile journey across northern Spain to the tomb of St. James. Donations Accepted by not required

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Massena - St. Mary's & St. Joseph's has Adoration every Friday.

Time: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church.

Features: First Friday of each month is preceded by Benediction.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

YOUNG ADULT ONLINE RETREAT

Diocese Young Adult Ministry will be sponsoring an "ONLINE" Lenten prayer group

Schedule: Sunday nights at 9p.m. each week during Lent.

Features: Busy schedule? Children? Life holding you back from adding prayer during Lent? Jump on line Sunday nights and join others as we pray our way to the Cross. Easy to join.

Contact: If interested please call or Email Lorraine Turgeon 315-323-4989 lturgeon@diogodensburg.org for more information.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

2012 TEKAKWITHA CONFERENCE

Albany - The annual Tekakwitha Conference has been planned

Date: July 18-22

Place: Airport Holiday Inn, 205 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205

Theme: "Walking in her footsteps in Kateri Country"

Contact: For more information or to register go to website www.tekconf.org

CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE

Syracuse - The Diocese of Syracuse will be sponsoring Ignite 2012, Catholic Men's Conference.

Date: March 31

Time: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Place: SRC Arena on the campus of Onondaga Community College

Speakers: Mass at 9am with Bishop Cunningham; Mike Piazza, major league catcher; Sean O'Hara, a successful entrepreneur; and Fr. Thomas Williams, LC, a professor at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Athenaeum in Rome.

Cost: \$45 before March 5 and \$55 after.

Contact: www.ignitecatholicmen.org



The Society For The Propagation Of The Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director
622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-2920; fax (315) 394-7401
mbrett@dioogdensburg.org

Give it up for Lent

From Director's Desk,
Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ,
Diocesan Mission Director

The beautiful and familiar "Peace Prayer" attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi concludes,

"...it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

That timely Lenten prayer touches the core of the Catholic Faith and offers us a threefold Lenten meditation on charity, forgiveness, and resurrection!

The Pontifical Mission Societies are the Pope's chief representatives in supporting the Church in the Missions. This is the greatest of all apostolates ... the direct propagation of our Faith to the poor and the needy. We feel a new energy, great zeal in our hope to maximize the gifts of the faithful in America.

When we all follow the Lenten expectation to "give up" something, we are able to provide for the mission Church from Africa to Asia, from Oceania to Latin America.

One of the things that is so special in this work, quite frankly, is the almost limitless potential that we have as Americans to do good.

We can greatly help the Church in the developing world right now, as a Lenten offering. We pray, we give ... we receive a satisfaction that comes from God Himself.

It is now Lent, a very serious season for some very serious action by all Christians. Will you please consider a significant gift for the missions – so that you may receive peace!

Would you pardon someone's offences, that Almighty God may pardon yours!

Would you offer a prayer for the needy in the missions – that they and you, by the power of Christ's Cross, may one day be born to eternal life!

"Give it up for Lent," they say. Yes, and give it to God by way of His most needy. Such charity, such goodness, literally goes to the ends of the earth. May the Lord bless you and your loved ones with a beautiful Easter season. Through you, may He do the same for countless souls far away.

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith"
when writing or changing your Will.
www.dioogdensburg.org/missionoffice

OBITUARIES

Altona – David P. "Tattoo" Francis Jr., 62; Funeral Services Feb. 9, 2012 at Holy Angels Church.

Brownville – Jean E. (Gunn) Silberling, 71; Funeral Services Feb. 6, 2012 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Brownville Cemetery.

Churubusco – Lillian Edna (LaClair) Smith, 88; Funeral Services Feb. 9, 2012 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church; burial in Immaculate Heart Cemetery.

Colton – Roberta A. "Suzie" (Brothers) Warner, 94; Funeral Services Feb. 8, 2012 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Visitation Cemetery, Norfolk.

Constableville – Regina (Ward) Higby, 78; Funeral Services Feb. 8, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Constableville Rural Cemetery.

Copenhagen – Joseph P. Reidy, 72; Funeral Services Feb. 4, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery, Watertown.

Croghan – Elberta (Trembley) Marolf, 77; Funeral Services Feb. 10, 2012 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

Gouverneur – Celia A. McAllister, 94; Funeral Services Feb. 9, 2012 at St. James Church; burial in Old St. James Cemetery.

Keene – Genevieve (Moore) Segard

Bushey, 85; Funeral Services Feb. 11, 2012 at St. Brendan's Church; burial in Norton Cemetery.

Keene – Kathleen T. Russell, 81; Funeral Services Feb. 10, 2012 at St. Brendan's Church.

Keeseville – Donald J. Spooner, 82; Funeral Services Feb. 6, 2012 at St. John's Church.

Madrid – Arnold B. Caskinette, 67; Funeral Services Feb. 10, 2012 at St. John's Church.

Massena – Ralph R. Coto, 84; Funeral Services Feb. 8, 2012 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Martha J. (Frederick) LaParr, 64; Funeral Services Feb. 10, 2012 at Allen-Nichols Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Peru – Roger J. Pepin Sr., 71; Funeral Services Feb. 11, 2012 at St. Augustine's Church.

Plattsburgh – Beatrice Alexina (Lamontain) White, 94; Funeral Services Feb. 10, 2012 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery, Peru.

Port Henry – Walter T. Wojewodzic, 88; Funeral Services Feb. 3, 2012 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Rouses Point – Edward F. "Buck" DeLoria, 73; Funeral Services Feb. 8, 2012 at M.B. Clark Funeral Home; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Mary D. (Duffy) Baker, 85; Funeral Services Feb. 9, 2012 at St. Brendan's Church; burial in St. Brendan's Cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Eileen J. Gardner, 61; Funeral Services Feb. 10, 2012 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home.

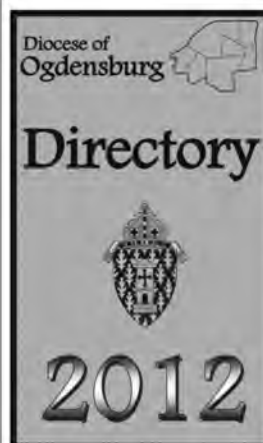
Saranac Lake – Shane Sheffield, 28; Funeral Service Feb. 12, 2012 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home.

Star Lake – Hazel "Pat" (Pickering) Brickey, 91; Funeral Services Feb. 6, 2012 at St. Hubert's Church.

Ticonderoga – James Edward Howard, 54; Funeral Services Feb. 11, 2012 at the Wilcox & Regan Funeral Home.

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YOUNG CATHOLIC VOICE

On a pilgrimage for life

By Mary Burns
Contributing writer

It was five years ago when my family and I went to Heuvelton to St. Raphael's to say goodbye to my sister, Jamie, as she was venturing on her trip to Washington D.C. I was in 7th grade and I wasn't quite sure what the March For Life was. So my sister told me to watch EWTN and to look for her on the television.

It started off with many prolife speakers. Never in my life had I ever paid so much attention to speakers. After hearing what they had to say I started to get very interested in this prolife movement.

I started to look up things about Roe V Wade. As soon as I saw a picture of an aborted baby I was struck. It seriously felt like a car had smashed into me. My heart sunk into my stomach! I just

stared for what seemed like an hour but it was only a few seconds.

I could not believe that someone could do this. Kill an innocent child in what is supposed to be the safest place in the world, a mother's womb. Whatever happened to the right to life that is stated in our Declaration of Independence?

This is what enkindled the fire in my heart. So as time went on I started to watch babies being delivered on the Discovery Health Channel. I just made me cry to see the awesomeness of God and to see the love in the parents eyes. And it was then when I decided what I wanted to be, a Catholic obstetrician! I just can't wait to welcome those babies into this world.

But what really saddens me is what about those that are lost to abortion?

What about their choice? This is why I go to the



Mary Burns

March For Life in Washington DC. This was my second year! I had so much fun, but the real reason we are there is to overturn Roe V Wade.

The first night we had a prolife speaker who told us her story about being raped at a party and choosing to keep her son and how he is the joy of her life.

On Sunday we went to the basilica. All I can say is wow! You really felt close to God

there.

What I loved the most was the youth Mass, Matt Maher concert and adoration.

Being in a place with thousands of teens your age, all praying for an end to abortion, it really gives you hope!

The next day was the "March". We were given blue scarfs to wear. I wrapped mine around my head to look like the Blessed Mother. On my back I wore a blanket that had on it Our Lady of Guadalupe.

There were over 400,000 people that marched. As I was walking down the street I was thinking about all the hard work people that came before me had done.

They walked down these streets fighting for the same thing. They would be so proud to see the next generation fighting for life.

I am so glad to go on these pilgrimages. They really make me sit back and think.

This fight doesn't just end here. We bring it back to our

hometowns and explain what needs to change.

Being in a place with thousands of teens your age, all praying for an end to abortion, it really gives you hope!

Pro-choice people will try their best to tear us down, but we will continue the fight because we have God on our side.

Let us pray that we will soon be gathering in Washington not for a hope that abortion will be illegal but for a celebration that it is illegal.

We look forward to the day that the Supreme Court will get it that "A person's a person no matter how small, from the very moment of their conception."

Editor's note: Mary, a junior at Ogdensburg Free Academy, is a parishioner of St. Mary's Cathedral.

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ON+WORD 2012



The Feast of the Epiphany 2012 will not be soon forgotten by a great number of teenagers from St. Stephen's parish, Croghan. The early January weekend provided 18 high school youth, including peer leaders, which teamed with five adults to lead a retreat experience reflecting on the many "stars" we follow. The retreat began at the parish vigil liturgy on Saturday evening including a special blessing for the event about to unfold. One highlight of the retreat was the Taize Prayer experience in candle light and incense, giving "homage" to the nativity scene in their midst. Tom Schneeberger, director of religious education at the parish, said, "We gifted on another as Christ-kins naming three gifts as did the Wise Men in the Gospel. We are very fortunate to live close to the Beaver Camp facility which provides great hospitality and in winter plentiful snow to "play" in. On+Word retreat 2012 was a "star of light," a light that will continue to illuminate a faith-filled path for our young church. Shown are Justin André, Genevieve Fidler, Nola Pominville, Alexandra Davis, Tom Schneeberger, Emmalee Ritz, Andrea Peters, Zane Brouty, Evan Lashbrooks and Alex Hall.